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SUBJECT: GEORGIA: RUSSIAN MISSION REFUSES TO ENGAGE ON  
GEORGIA RESOLUTION

Classified By: Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY AND COMMENT. At a meeting of French, German, U.K., U.S., Russian and Croatian PRs/DPRs on June 2, Russian Permrep Vitaly Churkin refused to engage on a German draft resolution to extend the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). Churkin said he had received emphatic instructions from Moscow that Russia was to seek another "technical extension of the UN mission for another 3-4 months" unless the West was willing to engage on a draft that "reflected the real state of affairs in the region." Churkin also threatened future Abkhaz participation in the UN's Joint Incident Resolution and Prevention Mechanism and questioned the viability of the Geneva talks. Churkin was unwilling to elaborate on what an acceptable draft would look like, nor was he willing to discuss any concerns with elements of the German draft or commit to any future discussions of the German draft. French, German, U.K., U.S. and Croatian Ambassadors all said they thought the German draft was reasonable, stressing that it reflected nearly verbatim the recommendations of the Secretary-General. USUN recommends that the Department engage with Moscow directly to insist that Russia engage in good faith on a draft resolution for Georgia. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

¶2. (C) Quad PRs/DPRs (France, Germany, U.K., U.S.) Croatia met with Russian PR Vitaly Churkin on June 2 to review the German (Quad-blessed) draft of the UNOMIG resolution. Churkin refused to engage on the text of the German draft. Instead, he read directly from what he said were his instructions from Moscow, which said, "If partners insist on discussing this draft then we can only return to another technical extension of three to four months. In such a case the Abkhaz are certain to refuse to participate in the Joint Incident Response and Prevention Mechanism (JIPRM), which would call into question the viability of the Geneva discussions." Churkin went on reading, saying, "the West should understand, that if they are interested in continuing the UN presence, then all partners should seek a mutually acceptable solution that reflects the real state of affairs in the region." Churkin added that the German draft ignored the new realities in the region that were created after the August 2008 conflict.

¶3. (C) Continuing to read, Churkin said that the current German draft also did not reflect recent conversations of Georgia SRSJ Johan Verbeke in Moscow, during which, Churkin said, Verbeke had described Russian suggestions for a security regime and mandate as reasonable. Churkin refused to elaborate on those suggestions when prodded by other Ambassadors, but instead reiterated that the German draft was "far from

the SYG's recommendations," both in its "substantive" and its "political" content. He said he was "not permitted to discuss" the draft, but instead he was instructed to seek a technical rollover in the absence of a "suitable" draft resolution. He also repeated that the Abkhaz would refuse to participate in the Joint Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism, which would in turn call the viability of the Geneva talks into question.

¶4. (C) Ambassador DiCarlo, supported by the French, U.K. and Croatian DPRs and German PR Mattusek, said she believed the German draft was a good basis for negotiating, and had been a good faith effort to reflect the SYG's recommendations. She said it made no sense to produce a new draft absent any input from Russia. She suggested that experts should meet to discuss the draft in detail-- a suggestion that Churkin refused. DiCarlo said the U.S. had also provided input to Verbeke for the SYG's recommendations and, like Russia, was disappointed that not all of our suggestions had been included in the SYG's report. However, she said, the U.S. was willing to engage in a good faith effort to find an acceptable resolution.

¶5. (C) COMMENT. We have seen Russia use the tactic of non-engagement in past negotiations (Kosovo, for example), and we are therefore not convinced that Russia will refuse to engage on a draft. We do believe, however, that Russia is testing how badly the West wants a UN mandate. Churkin has clearly stated

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that Russia is ready to adopt another technical rollover of UNOMIG. As the SYG pointed out in his May 19 report, a technical rollover would lead to further erosion of the security situation on the ground, but at the same time it would allow Russia to avoid being seen as blocking a reasonable security regime and UN mandate. We do not believe it would be wise to second-guess ourselves by presenting an alternative draft resolution to Russia. Instead, USUN believes the Department should engage directly with Moscow to insist that Russia engage in a good faith effort to find a way forward on Abkhazia. We may want to remind Moscow that we will hold Russia responsible if the UN mission expires and if security on the ground continues to erode. If Russia does refuse to engage before the current mandate expires on June 15, we will need to determine whether another technical rollover is acceptable to us, or whether alternatively, we should seek a revised mandate or no mandate at all.  
END COMMENT.

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